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NOTES BY THE WAY.

A FEW REFLECTIONS.

At such a season I will readily be pardoned for indulging in a few reflections. As I write, the old year, like a dying ember, fades slowly out. In the dim light, the past, like a slumbering phantom, rises up, as if to rehearse of its dreams. I listen for a while to the strange, sad story. One by one, different scenes unroll, and quickly pass away. I think of the progress in the field of material science, since its definite birth, in the general acceptance of the law of evolution. What upheaval! All things set adrift! Bibles, creeds, dogmas, etc., etc., floating like so much wreckage on the stream. I turn to the social realm. Here, also, everything is giving way. It seems as if the governing class can only maintain their stronghold of power by "trimming to the wind." Mind cure invades the domain of the apothecary; the old familiar face of miracle peers out now through natural law.

"The mask and fardels of the perished year
Pass to the rag-picker."

—:O:—

SOME FACTS.

My thoughts take a different turn. I think of the Theosophical Society. 1875 saw its birth. It enters 1894 with about 330 branches scattered throughout every part of the world, and literature in almost every language. And against what odds! The first tendency was to scoff and ridicule. Still it added steadily to its numbers. Those who considered themselves wiser, took the matter seriously. Among the latter were the Psychical Research Society, including Mr. Hodgson, of course. Then came the famous report, and who thought the Theosophical Society would live after that? "A bubble on the

stream," they said. The old maxim, "Never prophesy before you know," was lost sight of, or, at least, entirely disregarded; and so of prophecies there were no dearth. Those who *knew*, prophesied also, and theirs was a true prophecy. Now, Theosophy is the "stream," and Mr. Hodgson's report is the "bubble." Since the day Mrs. Besant laid aside Mr. Hodgson's report, to go and join the Theosophical Society, she has devoted almost every moment of her life to its service, with the result that "Theosophy" might almost now be termed "a household word."

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THE NEED.

It is well to reflect, if only for a few moments, even on facts so simple. To me, they are very eloquent. What valour! What self-denial! What patience! What immeasurable strength of purpose and devotion, on the part of one woman, aided by a few faithful comrades, with hearts beating true. They indicate very clearly, also, that the only limit to the possibilities of the future lies in ourselves. To realise the "terrible swift momentum" peculiar to this age, which enables us to do more, in the time, than any other, should bring home to each member of the T. S. a keener sense of responsibility. Things seem almost at a fever heat. The cry is for light! Never did men generally seem more anxious to lay aside the sinews of war; never such a desire for unity, for brotherhood. The Parliament of Religions focussed this desire for unity in the religious world. Does not the first object of our Society indicate that its founders anticipated this awakening? Has not the awakening, in great measure, been brought about by the Theosophical movement? It cannot be questioned that much of the pioneer work has been done by the T. S. But it is well to guard against reactionary tendencies. We have yet to pass through the heat of the day. Let us look, then, to "the rank and file." Let every Theosophist be interested in some kind of work for the cause. Apathy is the worst enemy we have to fear; it is the great enthraller. "So many people like Theosophy, and yet they at once wish to make it select and of high tone. It is for all men. It is for the common people who are ever with us. Others, again, come in and wait like young birds for food to be put into them: they *will not think*."

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I direct my thoughts to all members of the "HUMANISE THEOSOPHY." Theosophical Society who are seeking to restore to life its ancient heritage of wisdom. I hope, during the year, we will realise more strongly than ever that "just in proportion as we destroy separateness, do we begin to bear the one *Karma*, and share that one *Karma* of humanity." While the year is yet young: in the cold, clear whiteness of its early morn, let our hearts go out to humanity, so long nursed by sorrow, and for whom time is but a catalogue of hopes that die. Let us "humanise Theosophy." A better watchword for 1894, I think, would be difficult to find.

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H. Dharmapala, addressing the Congress at the A BUDDHIST ON THE T. S. World's Fair, said: "I am here as a Buddhist. I come to attend the Religions' Congress as such; but I am here to-day to express my deepest sympathy, my deepest allegiance to the

Theosophical cause, simply because it made me respect my own religion. I was in school, and read the name of the Theosophical Society, and when the founders arrived we welcomed them to Ceylon. They came there with a message of peace and love. They said: 'Study your own religion; abuse not the religion of others, and try to find out the truth: but lead a pure life.' That was the message they brought to Ceylon; I accepted it, and here I am to-day as evidence of that fact."

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Professor Chakravaiti said, also addressing the
A BRAHMAN ON THE T. S. Congress: "I come from a land hoary with antiquity. I belong to a race bent with age. I profess a religion, the dawn of which is, according to our mythology, simultaneous with the dawn of creation, and the greatest research has not been able to prove to the contrary. The religion I belong to was once gigantic in its strength. It was like the mighty oak, round whose trunk crept the various ivies, with all the moral, political, and social institutions and organisations of my mother country. But even an Indian sky is not without its cloud. Time came when this oak lost its sap. It seemed that all the institutions would wither away, with the passing away of the life of the oak, round which all of them clustered. It seemed that the mighty edifice, with all its grand architecture, was tottering, and once we were about to exclaim: 'Shrine of the Mighty, is this all that remains of thee?' At the moment of this crisis, help was bound to come, because India's death-note had not yet struck. It had yet its mission to perform in the history of the world. It had yet to help the coming tide of evolution; it had yet to send its ideas across oceans, to lift the million souls; therefore help came. But not from its learned priests and Brahmans, who were the traditional teachers. To that woman, H. P. Blavatsky, was given the proud privilege. And now I can see the withered and gaunt hands of the spirit of my motherland, land of mysteries, land of occultism, land of sanctity, stretching out across oceans and continents, shedding its blessings of peace and of love."

D.N.D.

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A CHRISTIAN THEOSOPHIST.

JACOB BOEHME was a shoe-maker, who lived at Görlitz, in Silesia, upper Germany, at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. He was a man entirely devoid of all advantages of birth, education, or even of much intellectual talent or literary faculty. Nevertheless, he wrote books concerning the vastest and most subtle problems that can occupy the human mind; and these books have formed the study and delight of some of the deepest modern thinkers—men like Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Emerson, and Sir Isaac Newton.

From early boyhood, when he herded cattle near his native village, and in manhood, when in the midst of his daily work of making and mending shoes, he was subject to strange mystic experiences and visions. From the first, too, he gave evidence of unusual seriousness, and, as he grew to manhood, was wont to spend much time in prayer and the study of the Bible. Travelling as a journeyman from place to place, he was much struck and deeply depressed by the prevalence of sorrow, pain, and religious discord among his fellows. One day, after a long period of doubt and mental distress, he became suddenly illuminated

by a wonderful inner light, a vivid and glorious exaltation of consciousness. The mysteries which had been weighing upon him seemed to open up and clear away. He knew and saw himself simultaneously present in "all three worlds, namely, the divine, angelical, and paradisiacal world, and then the dark world, being the original of Nature; . . . and then, thirdly, the external or visible world, being a pro-creation or external birth, or as a substance expressed or spoken forth from both the internal and spiritual worlds." The source and nature of good and evil revealed themselves to his inner vision, and, in fact, he seemed to gain a glimpse into the workings of the universe "as in a *chaos*, wherein all things are couched and wrapt up; but it was impossible . . . to explicate and unfold the same."

This condition of ecstasy continued for seven days, during which Boehme went about the ordinary business of his vocation. Outwardly there was nothing specially noticeable about him, "but the triumph that was then in my soul, I can neither tell nor describe. I can only liken it to a resurrection from the dead."

The mystic vision passed away, but again opened itself within him from time to time, "as in a young plant," in ever-increasing clearness and coherence. At last what had formerly appeared to him chaotically, in isolated fragments, revealed itself as a harmonious unity, a distinct whole. He felt a "powerful driving and instigation" to write it down, and so in the morning before work time, and in the evening after a hard day's toil, he would take up his pen, and "as a sudden shower, which hitteth whatsoever it lighteth upon, just so it happened to me: whatever I could apprehend and bring into the external principle of my mind, the same I wrote down."

The result was the book known as "*Aurora, or the Morning Redness*." It was intended by its author to serve merely as a "memorial" to himself; for he found he was liable to forget much of what he had seen in ecstasy. However, the manuscript was picked up by a nobleman in the shoemaker's shop, and so much impressed was he by its contents that he had it published, with the result of bringing to Boehme great fame and some considerable persecution and annoyance from a certain bigoted ecclesiastic, who professed to find in Boehme's writings nothing but blasphemy and the odour of bees-wax. On the other hand, many learned and cultured laymen eagerly sought his acquaintance, and considered it a privilege to correspond with him. The persecution came to a head when Boehme was cited to appear before the Elector of Saxony and a number of eminent theologians, including two professors of mathematics. The result of the examination for heresy was that Boehme quite captivated all his judges, who put him many knotty questions connected with their own special subjects, and who, while professing themselves unable always to follow him, bore witness to his "marvellously high mental gifts," as well as to his simple, noble, and modest bearing. "I would not take the whole world," said one of the most learned among them, "and condemn such a man." After this Boehme was left in comparative peace by his enemies, who contented themselves after his death by defacing his tomb.

His writings, subsequent to the "*Aurora*," were very numerous. In the later ones a great improvement in style and clearness is observable. This is due, not only to the fact that the visionary power from which he drew his inspiration, became more clear and apprehensible to his own intellect, but also to the effect of intercourse with those men of thought and learning who were his friends. They taught him the use of certain Latin words and philosophic terms which occur in his later works.

Boehme remained always a sincere adherent of the Lutheran church. He

died peacefully in 1624, after partaking of the Sacrament, and with the words on his lips, "Now go I hence into Paradise." He was married, and had four sons, for all of whom he was careful to provide.

The system of Theosophy set forth in Boehme's writings is remarkably similar in all essential points to that put forward by the Eastern adepts. "The book in which all mysteries lie," he says, "is man himself; he himself is the book of the Being of all beings, seeing he is the likeness or similitude of God"—words which contain the rationale of all mysticism, Eastern and Western, and show its universal, catholic, and authentic basis. Again, "In God all beings are but one being, viz., an eternal One or unity, the eternal only *good*, which eternal one without severalty were not manifest to itself. Therefore, the same hath breathed forth itself out of itself, that a plurality or distinct variety might arise, which variety or severalty hath induced itself into a peculiar *will* and properties, the properties into desires, and the desires into beings. . . . The centre of each thing is spirit . . . the separation in a thing is a self-peculiar *will* of its own impressure or forming, where each spirit bringeth itself into being, according to its essential desire." Thus we see that for Boehme, as for the modern Theosophist, everything is *alive*. "A hard, rough stone hath no life that is movable, for the elemental vegetable life standeth mute and still therein, . . . there is not anything in this world wherein the elemental as well as the sidereal dominion doth not lie, but in one thing it is more movable, active and working than another."

The original *will*, out of which everything proceeds, thus becomes split up, as it were, and divided among the innumerable lives, elements, and properties of Nature. In the strife and interplay of these, it would lose and stultify itself, but for the fact that the whole of creation is in reality an emanation of Deity desirous of realising, consciously and knowingly, its own fullness of Being, its own infinite perfection and glory. Hence arises perpetually the redeeming impulse in Nature, the current of return—what we would call the *evolutionary* tendency. In Boehme's mystical doctrine of the Trinity, this is the work of the *Son*. The aboriginal, out-breathed, out-going life is from the *Father*; while that which is ever connecting, reconciling, or "making intercession" between the two opposing wills in Nature, is the *Holy Spirit*.

Man has in him these two contrasted tendencies—one, the "self-will" towards material life, egotism, separation; the other, or *Christ-will* towards liberation, unity, spirit. When the two wills are harmonised together, as they were in "Adam" before his "fall" (into matter, and into ignorance and the sexual state), the divine or "paradisiacal" life exists. Adam "fell" through "inducing his desire, longing, and lust into the outward, astral, elemental and earthly kingdom . . . and thereby he fell into the sleep of the external *magia*. And thus it is also with the *new birth* [whereby man regains his lost Paradise.] Through *imagination*, and an earnest serious desire, we become again impregnated of the Deity, and receive the new body in the old." This is the new Adam of which the New Testament speaks, and which was "brought to light" by Jesus of Nazareth. A mere "historical faith" in the latter is of no use. "The seeming holy flattering comfort with Christ's death availeth nothing, but to enter into Christ's death; and to spring up anew in Him; and to arise in Him and with Him, and become *Christ* in the new man."

This "new man" will not become truly and completely manifest in humanity until the "second coming of Christ," which would seem by Boehme's description to correspond with what modern Theosophists know as the "seventh race." Men, he says, will then have returned to the androgyne, or a-sexual state;

they will have a thorough knowledge and control of Nature and her qualities; and they will be pure, holy and divine as Adam was in Paradise.

One might easily dwell upon Boehme's limitations as a thinker, and point out how even his ethics would gain breadth and strength by the admixture of certain elements which we have gladly borrowed from the East. Such a task, however, would be a thankless one. He remains to us a wonderful example of the greatness and wisdom of the soul, and of its power to triumph over natural hindrances and disabilities, and to pierce through and illuminate the dead letter of a creed. How much might modern "orthodoxy" learn from the inspired shoemaker!

H. M. MAGEE.

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LETTER AND SPIRIT.

IT was not a vision, or a dream of the night that came to me with the birth of the New Year: at the most I had fallen into a brown study; but I saw the four narrow walls of the room where I sat thinking, and writing. The lamp burned brightly before me: I heard the regular monotonous ticking of the clock, and the noise of the traffic, that even at that hour, had not ceased in the busy street; my fingers did not relinquish their hold upon the pen; the ink was scarcely dry upon the paper, when I again continued my work.

I had lifted my eyes for an instant, and the firelight shone across the pictured faces of two whom I call friends—men of different temperaments, different creeds, and different minds, yet both striving with heart and hand to make at least some of earth's rough places smoother for the weary feet of their brother-men. As I gazed at their portraits, I wondered what was their past; and then, for a few seconds, I realised that time, and space, are illusions, and that the inner vision is not bounded by matter. The curtain of time was drawn aside; the gulf, that in our ignorance we place between that portion of infinite duration we call past, and that which we name present, was bridged over; once more I saw, as in a magic mirror, an age long gone bye, and moved in the centre of a mighty civilisation in a land hoary with antiquity; and it was given to me to see something of other lives passed in that grander, calmer time.

Two youths sat together upon a grassy slope that overlooked a mighty river; overhead the crescent moon hung low in the clear, blue sky, and shed its silvery light over the fair rose garden, and softly outlined the distant mountains, and the ancient city. At their feet lay the scroll of parchment, over which their heads had bent together before the daylight died. An ancient stranger at the city gate that morning, had spoken words to them that awoke an answering chord in their hearts; brave, strong, true words, promise of treasure greater than that which they had set themselves to win; into their very souls he seemed to look, and bade them, when they left their home as merchants, bound for distant lands, to seek not alone for pearls or precious spices, or the costly fabrics of the Orient, but for the greater treasure—the wisdom of the ages.

Scene after scene passed before me; through many lands, among many races, I saw the two comrades, and marked how often they drew aside from the concourse of merchants, and the bustle of the busy bazaar, and visited shrine, temple and pagoda, questioning saints, and sages, and all from whom words of wisdom fell; sitting humbly at the feet of each, and asking: "Master, what is truth?" And some answered them in unknown tongues, and some said sadly, "We too seek it"; and those who knew the least, spoke in mysterious whispers, hard to understand—and no soul spoke to their souls.

After careful enquiry, and weary search, they determined to part with all their merchandise, and treasure, and spend their lives in finding the one whose voice first spoke to their hearts. Upon the edge of a bleak desert they found him, and tarried awhile beneath the humble shelter that served him for protection; and kept silence until he chose to speak. They tarried many days alone with the sage, and the stars, until he answered their unspoken questions, and said: "My sons, what can I tell you? I, myself, know not the truth, and if I knew, how could I express the infinite? for a spirit still imprisoned in matter, the highest truth is unattainable, and words are powerless to express the unexpressible; men seek truth under many forms; they weave for her fantastic garments from the woof and warp of their own many-tinged thoughts; they view her with distorted visions; under different names they worship her; each, and all, see but one aspect of truth, but truth is one and eternal; the mind can never open out or expand towards the true; only by heart-consciousness and heart-light can she be perceived; that alone can illuminate the path; where you perceive it within yourselves you will discern it in others, and know that words, and systems, are nothing—but the truth is all."

And they said: "Master, point out to us the first step towards that light."

And he said: "It lies always close at hand, and straight before you."

And the young men journeyed on, and, where the road branched off, to East, and West, they parted company, and each went their own way.

The scene changed; again I saw the moonlit garden, and the mighty river. Two old men sat together there, and each looking into the other's eyes, saw the heart-light reflected; and one, as his hand sought and clasped his comrade's, said with a voice thin with age: "After I left you, I travelled far, and grew old, and weary, and despairing, for in my heart was a perpetual longing; and I passed the shrines of Benares, and reached a spot beneath the Himalayan snows, where, in old times, Lord Buddha taught his own. I found there a holy ascetic with the yellow robe, and he received me graciously, and for years I followed him, carrying the beggar's bowl, until I found the way of peace, and then my thoughts turned to you, and I came to seek you, that you too might enter, and learn the love and pity, and Brotherhood, that the Master taught."

"I, too, have found it," said his comrade. "Beside a misty lake, in the early morning, I heard a calm, weary voice uttering the words of wisdom, and I drew near and listened, and followed him; love and compassion, and Brotherhood, my Master taught in Galilee."

"What drew you back here?"

"Ask me not my brother: men's hatred and blindness are not pleasant subjects: the sun was darkened, and darkness also fell upon my life when the Master crowned his teachings with his death, and ever in my ears unceasingly I hear a woman's wailing cry, until earth's melodies are drowned by it."

Two re-incarnating egos entered earth-life together at the close of the nineteenth century; but, at the gates of birth, they missed each other, and, grown to manhood, they sought the truth, as they had done once before, under different teachers; and the one found and recognised the same teaching unchanged in aught; it fell from a woman's lips, who was a servant of the same Masters as the teacher had been, who, long before, had worn the yellow robe, and carried the beggar's bowl by Benares. But the other searcher after truth, failed to find the teaching that haunted him; a dim, uncertain memory of a voice by the misty lake; but the lessons were not forgotten; the wail of the great

orphan humanity awakened that love and compassion that lay dormant within him, a heritage from his past.

The New Year bells ring out across christian England, a land of cant, and shams, and bibles, and slums; instead of a pæan of joy, the chimes seemed to one heart, at least, to be an inharmonious accompaniment to the unuttered "Miserère," which is the only psalm of life of the poor; and mingled with the carols, came the sound that had silenced earth's melodies for him once before—the echo of a woman's wailing borne adown the ages: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." The figure of a dead prophet, fitting emblem of a lifeless creed, hangs upon the rood above the altars where the West kneels to pray, whilst the heavens above them are as brass, and over the portals of cathedral, church, and chapel, the one word, "Ichabod," is written; the spirit which animated and inspired the founder of Christianity, dwells not where the many-coloured windows shed their iridescent light in an aureole around the heads of kneeling worshippers; his teaching is not heard where the majestic organ peals; his message is seldom voiced from the pulpits of to-day; yet the same spirit that was in him lives wherever men give themselves for others in uttermost self-sacrifice, or in small daily acts of kindness; it breathes in the slums where the poor man is the poor man's friend; where the famished work-girl shares her last dry crust. The truth has not failed; the Christianity taught in Galilee has not failed; *humanity has*.

The bells ring out their message of peace, and good-will, and are answered by earth's discords; yet some are striving to restore the ancient harmony again, and it matters not by what name they call themselves, or under what shibboleths they veil their beliefs, if they strive towards the true; he who calls himself Theosophist stands beside a girl whom the laws of supply and demand have killed, in a damp, mildewed, narrow room, with rotten flooring, and broken roof; where the lamp flickers fitfully in the fever-burdened air, and the fire has died out upon the hearth; the sounds that make night hideous in many quarters of the city come in through the unglazed window, the drunkard's curses, and the childrens' cries; but as he stands there beside the dead (whose last hours were perhaps her best), he knows that with all humanity it shall at last be well.

And to the other, across the midnight air, a message flashed from the true, into a receptive heart, with the carols of the bells; it whispered the old secret, the teaching of the Wisdom-religion, and of the Christianity of long ago; sweeter than sweetest music, pure as the moonlight that flooded a prison cell, it whispered the secret of that spiritual alchemy, which alone is powerful to transmute the animal into the divine, the old secret of becoming—"be a Christ." And many who heard the message, said of him, as of his Master, "he blasphemes"; what matter? words do not overthrow a truth the soul perceives; to be a Christ, to be a Theosophist, is the same thing; and both are but mortal forms through which the light shines, for "ye are the light of the world"; "the kingdom of heaven is within you"; "to whatever place one would go, that place one's own self becomes"; "the ancient gods and poets knew it"; "they became it, and were immortal."

K. B. L.

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GLEANINGS FROM THEOSOPHICAL LITERATURE.

. All who have time and opportunity are invited to send selections on the subject chosen for each month. These will be arranged, and appear under this heading.

Subject for February—"Dreams."

ELEMENTALS.

ELEMENTALS are the creatures evolved in the four kingdoms of earth, air, fire, and water, and called by the Kabbalists gnomes, sylphs, salaman-

ders, and undines. They may be termed the forces of nature, and will either operate effects as the servile agents of general law, or may be employed by the disembodied spirits—whether pure or impure—and by living adepts of magic and sorcery, to produce desired phenomenal results. Such beings never become men.—H.P.B. *Isis Unveiled*.

Elementals proper are what Tertullian called the "princes of the powers of the air." This class is believed to possess but one of the three attributes of man. They have neither immortal spirits nor tangible bodies; only astral bodies, which partake, in a distinguished degree, of the element to which they belong and also of the ether. They are a combination of sublimated matter and a rudimental mind. Some are changeless, but still have no separate individuality, acting collectively, so to say.—*Ibid.* Page 311, Vol. I.

Elementals are living forces, and they may be perceived by him who has acquired the power to look within his own soul. Each of these forces corresponds to some animal desire, and if it is permitted to grow, is symbolised by the form of the animal which corresponds to its nature. At first they are thin and shadowy, but as the desire which corresponds to them is indulged in, they become more and more dense, and gain strength as our desires grow into a passion. These Elementals may live in the soul realm of man as long as he lives, and grow strong, for they live on his life principle, and are fed by the substance of his thoughts. They may even become objective to him, if during a paroxysm of fear, or in consequence of some disease they are enabled to step out of their sphere. They are only destroyed by the power of the *spiritual will* of man which annihilates them as the light annihilates darkness—F. Hartman. *Magic.* Page 36.

"When you succeed in seeing a distant friend, that is not knowledge: that is the fact of *being* in the condition or vibration, that is that friend at the time. The translation of it into a mental reckoning or explanation, is what is called knowledge. To see an Elemental on the astral plane, is for the time to be, in some part of our nature, in that state or condition.—Quoted by Julius. "Path." January, 1888.

An Elemental is a centre of force, without intelligence, without moral character or tendencies, but capable of being directed in its movements by human thoughts, which may consciously or not, give it any form, and to a certain extent intelligence. The class which has most to do with us answers to the above description.—"Path." May, 1888. *Conversations on Occultism*.

As it (the Elemental world) is automatic and like a photographic plate, all atoms continually arriving at and departing from the "human system" are constantly assuming the impression conveyed by the acts and thoughts of that person, and, therefore, if he sets up a strong current of thought, he attracts Elementals in greater numbers, and they all take on one prevailing tendency or colour, so that all new arrivals find a homogeneous colour or image which they instantly assume.—*Ibid.*

Ceremonial magic involves at almost every step the use of a sword. After the invocator has used the ceremonial for some time, he at last creates within his aura, a duplicate of what he previously used and pictured on the floor or walls. In this he is no longer master, for, it being placed on that part of his nature of which he is ignorant, the sword of metal becomes an astral sword, with the handle held by the demons or influences he unwisely raised. They then attack him where no defence can be interposed—on the astral and mental planes, and just as surely as the wise man's words were uttered, he at last perishes by the weapon he himself used.—William Brehon. "Path," June, 1888.

The production of phenomena is not possible without either the aid or disturbance of Elementals. Each phenomenon entails the expenditure of great force, and also brings on a correspondingly great disturbance in the Elemental world, which disturbance is beyond the limit natural to ordinary human life. It then follows that, as soon as the phenomenon is completed, the disturbance occasioned begins to be compensated for. The Elementals are in greatly excited motion, and precipitate themselves in various directions. They are able to enter into the sphere of unprotected persons, and especially those persons who are engaged in the study of occultism. And then they become agents in concentrating the Karma of those persons, producing troubles and disasters often, or other difficulties which otherwise might have been so spread over a period of time. This will go to explain the meaning of the statement that an adept will not do any phenomenon unless he sees the desire in the mind of another adept; for then there is a sympathetic relation established, and also a tacit acceptance of the consequences which may ensue.—*Conversations on Occultism. "Path." June, 1888.*

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SOME THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION.

THE education of children is certainly a matter for grave consideration by Theosophists. In spite of the many modern improvements in methods of teaching, in schools, books, maps, and other up-to-date appliances, there still remains two great obstacles in the road to real development of the whole man, *i.e.*, the examination system, and the interference or, worse still, the indifference of parents. If an enlightened teacher determines to avoid the first, and to endeavour to train pupils in the way of learning for its own sake, virtue for its own sake, certain parents step in and say:—"I don't want new experiments tried on my children; if I do not find them up to the mark of others I must send them elsewhere. I cannot afford to let them fail in the race of life, and it would not be fair to them." Thus the system of competition invades the schoolroom; the Kindergarten even, where two or three little ones are gathered together, there is the prize and the punishment.

Now, how is this to be avoided? So long as parents are imbued with the spirit of false ambition for their children, they cannot be persuaded that any other system than that of marks or prize-giving will avail to advance them in life; they want to see *results*. And so they will, undoubtedly, but not of the best kind. The indifferent parents are more easily dealt with at first. But some day a clever friend will tell them that their children must pass examinations in order to "get on" in life, and then, if they fail, the want of success will be visited on the unfortunate schoolmaster with a fury proportionate to the parents' former indifference.

Quis custodiat custodes? Who shall examine the examiners; who shall educate the parents? Unless Theosophists are prepared to deprive their children of the advantages, and these are many and not to be despised, of public school life, I see no help for the present state of things, except the constant inculcation, during the home life, of principles in direct contradiction to those obtaining at school. They must show their children that they do not care for the marks and prizes, that the only things they value are an increase in habits of truthfulness, industry, moral courage, brotherliness, and all kinds of usefulness. And they, themselves, must set the example, and not expect their children to practice every kind of virtue, while they, themselves, walk in the broad paths of selfish pleasure.

After all, it is the home training that forms the character, so far as it is dependent on training, and that training begins in the nursery, in the very cradle itself. Wise nurses and mothers will take care to enforce such rules as are necessary for right living and order, and so teach the little ones wholesome lessons of obedience, and the relation of cause to effect, before they come to the sterner lessons they have afterwards to learn, at school and in the world. But they must be taught in the spirit of love, for love is the best teacher. Children must be made to feel unmistakably that they are restrained by a loving hand, and not by a mere iron rule. No one should undertake the office of teacher who has not a genuine love of the young, the power of sympathising in their joys and sorrows, who is not as much interested in making them happy as in making them good. Obedience must be enforced, but the *art* of enforcing it is a lifelong study.

A great help in training to prompt obedience is drill—if possible, musical drill. There is something catching in the feeling of all moving together; obeying the word of command in a body is easier than an isolated act of obedience. It is the *esprit-de-corps* which alone can move sluggish natures. Drill is also the best corrective of the “fidgets,” and should, therefore, be introduced as a break between mental studies.

An excellent means of mental training is the study of some science for which children can make their own collections; shells, seaweeds, birds' eggs, provided there is no cruelty shown, and here is an opportunity for teaching kindness to animals—all these are good, but the one open to the fewest objections is that of botany. For this it is not necessary to live in the country, now that our parks and gardens are so well stocked, and wild flowers can be so easily bought, even in London. Botany trains the observing powers, gives an interest to every new walk and each new place visited; and the arranging and classifying of plants is good scientific training, and may prove a life-long pleasure. The child who has been carefully taught botany may take up any science in after life, without feeling the least bothered by nomenclature or other difficulties; the method of one science is the method of all.

As regards moral teaching, it should be infused into every study and every act of life. Nevertheless, it may be well to give occasional direct instruction in ethics. Dr. Felix Adler has written an admirable work on this subject, called, “On the Teaching of Ethics,” which I heartily commend to the notice of parents and teachers. He recommends a gradual series of moral lessons, by means of fairy tales, fables, stories from the Bible, wisely chosen and told in the teacher's own words, at the same time inviting familiar conversation on the subject in hand.

And here I would like to say a few words on what is called, and certainly is, the religious difficulty. I think Theosophists will be wrong if they shirk imparting a knowledge of, at all events, certain parts of the Bible to their children. Every one should know the Shâstras of his own country before he studies those of other lands. I have known one or two examples of those so anxious to put all Scriptures on an equality, that they have remained in total ignorance of their own English Bible. They have, consequently, not known how to meet Christians in controversy, except by denial or abuse. Breadth often means shallowness, and a roaming disposition may be an excuse for want of sympathy nearer home. It is quite possible to teach the religion of your own land without prejudicing the mind against that of other countries and peoples, and an occasional lesson may, of course, be given from other sacred books, using such a collection as Conway's *Anthology*; but to teach exclusively from Indian sources is a practice I should, personally, think unwise.

Lastly, I would recommend Theosophists to consider a subject on which I have once before written in the pages of *Lucifer*, that is, the co-education of the sexes to a greater extent than is common at present. Men and women have to live and work together through life; why then should they be deemed unfit companions during the few years which separate their early home life from manhood and womanhood? Boys become brutalised by being herded together, learn to despise their mothers and sisters, to think home rule is "rot," and this is called making men of them. It is a denaturalising process. Girls get silly and simpering, lose in breadth and moral strength, and when again thrown together with young men, are shy and unnatural, prone to flirtation and fond of flattery. In fact, all faults in either case become accentuated, instead of getting mutually corrected.

These few hints are not merely theoretical. They are the result of long experience in the management of children. Their companionship has now become to me almost a necessity, so far more interesting and sympathetic are they than men and women whose characters are hardened. I have often felt the truth of Longfellow's lines:—

As the leaves are to the forest,
For light and air and food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood;
Such to the world is children,
Through them it feels the glow,
Of a brighter and happier climate,
Than reaches the trunks below.

If I may express an opinion as to the course most desirable for Theosophists to pursue, I should not advocate the entire separation of their children from all those not like-minded with themselves. Rather I should teach them to live in the world without being too much of it, and thus to cultivate independence of character and opinion. We do not want them to become sectarian, narrow-minded, and uncharitable, which they are sure to be if they are taught that every one is wrong but themselves, and those of their own particular sect. Plant the truth, and seeds of error will not easily spring up. But plant it in love, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

E. KISLINGBURY, F.T.S.

—:O:—

OUR LOTUS CIRCLE.

CHATS WITH CHILDREN.

DEAR CHILDREN—You love animals, I know. All children love to watch their pretty ways, and stroke their soft, warm coats, and look into their kind, trustful eyes. Did you ever fancy that the eyes of your four-footed brothers have a dumb, silent appeal in them, as if they asked your help and pity, and prayed you take care of them, and use your strength to protect their weakness?

I have seen this in the eyes of many a beast. Look next time that a cow comes up and puts his nose over the gate, and says "Good morning" to you, and you will see he asks your help and pity for his suffering kindred.

But I am so young, and weak, and powerless, you will say.

Do not say it. Do not think it. Never let such an idea enter your head while there is a creature in the whole world that needs your help. You, child though you are, are armed if you desire it, with all the strength of the strongest man. You can draw upon love—upon the universal love—upon love that is stronger than death—for all the power you need. And than love there is nothing stronger in heaven or earth.

I want you very much to understand about this wonderful power of love, because I am going to ask you to use it to help and protect all that suffers; so you must be patient while I try and make you realise what it is, and where it comes from.

The Old Book that your forefathers, the Puritans, studied more than any other, taught that God is love, and that God is everywhere, and that without God—that is love—was not anything made. Now you will remember that the Puritans were very strong men, and that they got their nickname because they tried to live pure lives. These Puritans were not perfect, or they would have been gods, and not men; but they were a great deal stronger than the other men of their time, because they tried to obey their consciences. They—in spite of their faults—taught us one thing. They showed us that a strong faith in God being around us, and *in* us, will enable each man and child to draw strength to himself from the universal strength that wraps him round. Yet this feeling that Love, or the great Unknown Power that men call God, is everywhere; that the world, earth, air, sea, and sky, the countless stars of heaven, the glittering dew-drop on the grass, are forms of Life and Love. Each form obeys the law of its being, each acts in a certain way, guided by a knowledge, or instinct, or conscience, that is one with its life. To illustrate this, I will tell you that sound is heard and obeyed by particles of sand. When certain sounds are made, the particles move themselves in a given direction. A lady, Mrs. Watts-Hughes, who noticed this law, has lately made experiments of the effects of musical notes on movement in sand, and on producing certain sounds she has seen the semi-fluid paste arrange itself into leaves and flower-forms and various beautiful designs. This shows us that even grains of sand are not the dead, unconscious atoms some have supposed, but that they are living and acting forces, obeying the law of harmony. Now I want you to get used to the idea that all things are full of Life and Love, and all things are responsive to Law. Also, that in living out their lives, they are actively engaged in carrying out the Law.

I have already told you that the source of all things is Love. Now you know Love produces harmony. When you love a little friend you wish to show your love by serving him. This love and service bring harmony between you. Service, then, is obedience to the Law of Love, and produces harmony. Harmony, as we have seen with the sand, sets in motion certain movements of the air, called vibrations. These vibrations produce regular and beautiful forms and figures. And so all goes on in regular and perfect action. Now to get everything, and everybody, to live out a life of *service*, that is, of obedience to the Law of Love, which is Harmony, is the lesson we are here to learn on earth. Until we have learned this lesson we must come again and again to school, and for us no lasting happiness is possible. You are old enough to know that at present we have not learned obedience to Law. Even children can, and do, break in upon harmony, and produce discord. When they are playing together, it sometimes happens that instead of each desiring to serve and make others happy, some one among the playmates forgets the wishes of his companions, and cares, for the minute, only for himself. Now, in this minute of disobedience, what has the child done? He has stopped the flow of harmony that was rolling through the spheres, and he has awakened discord. It is as though, in a lovely melody, a clumsy hand crashed upon a wrong chord, and set all ears tingling. See how powerful is a little child. Its self-love can check the current of Love, the Source of Life, in its flow. But remember, as each is powerful for evil, so is each powerful for good; and bear in mind that the initiate St. Paul taught

men that they were "heirs of the kingdom," "workers together with him" (the Christ). But what I want you particularly to notice is that as each atom responds to the law of harmony, so each is affected by the discord. Each is turned from its onward, happiness-producing course, and turned back upon itself. Each is, as we say, "put out." Notice what happens in your own mind when some ugly passion awakens in you, and makes you blind to all besides yourself, when the wants and wishes of others are hidden by a "I want this," "I will have that." You are a little mirror of the universe. What you see in yourself is to be seen in the movements of the sand, that will not flow forth into lovely forms while discord sounds. When anger or self-will lets the "I" shut out "the other" is there not a rush of blackness that clouds the mind and makes miserable the heart? Where, now, is the sunshine that lighted up your little interior world an hour ago? Look in the glass when you are "good," and then look again when "selfishness" has you in its ugly clutches, and see how the atoms that compose your body have changed their work. Now they are busy producing pain and ill health, and the face tells the tale. It is the punishment for disobedience to the Law of Harmony that they are working out. They cannot help it—poor little atoms. They, too, are under the law. You, their king, have let in upon them the enemy, discord, and stopped the flow of kindly Love, and thrown them into confusion and disorder, from which they will struggle by-and-by, giving you pain all the time, while they form their ranks anew. Now I am going to tell you what is happening every day to poor dumb animals that have been given into the keeping of man, and that look at you so pitifully, and ask you so plainly, with their beautiful beseeching eyes, to be kind to their brother and sister beasts who serve you faithfully, and deserve your protection. Far away over the sea, thousands of cattle are packed into ships that they may be brought to England for a beef-loving nation to eat. How are they packed? With nice clean straw to lie down in, and plenty of clean fresh water to drink, when the motion of the steamer makes them feel sick and ill? This is what the *Standard* newspaper tells us the other day:—"A floating cattle-shed is packed from end to end with as many beasts as can be crammed into it; almost like herrings in a barrel. The beasts are packed tightly together, with no room to move, to change their position, or even to lie down. During the whole voyage, lasting perhaps fourteen days or three weeks, the wretched brutes have to remain on their legs, stacked against each other, and tossed from side to side by the motion of the vessel. If an animal lies down he does not rise again, for the life is speedily trampled out of him by his companions, and therefore the drovers are employed during the whole of the voyage in goading, bludgeoning, and torturing the wretched animals, in order to keep them on their legs."

There is no love and harmony here, and this is what happens. The atoms that go to build up the bodies of these tortured creatures are thrown into, and kept in, horrible confusion, producing blood-poisoning, disease, and often death. "Instances are on record of fifty, one hundred, two hundred, and even three hundred dead bodies of animals being thrown overboard at a time. One vessel landed only fourteen cattle out of three hundred and sixty." But let us see what happens to the animals that are not tortured to death in the ocean journey, but which can be killed on landing, and taken to market as meat. The molecules of which the flesh of these animals is composed are in disorder; that is to say, in a diseased, disorganised condition, for hate and greed have been at work, and the reign of Love and Order has been displaced. Now people eat this diseased flesh, and the law of retribution—some people call it *Karma*—

begins its work. Disordered atoms are introduced into more or less healthy bodies, and cause at once morbid action—that is, diseased action. Presently we have hospitals and sick rooms, and lunatic asylums full of suffering people. The cruelty inflicted from desire to get money, or the desire to eat that which habit has taught some people to think pleasant to the taste has brought its own punishment, and the suffering of the poor helpless beast is avenged on man who has the choice of living in the law of loving kindness, or in wilful disobedience to that law, but who never, never can escape the fruit of his actions. For the law is unchangeable. “Perfect justice rules the world!” “As ye sow, so shall ye reap”; and every breath of air, every grain of sand, is an active instrument in working out the Law of Love and Harmony, even when this law has to be taught to the children of men through pain and anguish.

A child can understand this, and she can by right thought, right speech, and good-will to all that lives, help to bring that day more quickly when “The will of the Father shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.”—Lovingly yours,
K. E. M.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE THEOSOPHICAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—In entering the lists as a “parent” in response to your invitation last month, I hope that what I wish to say will not be understood as opposition to the plan of “Lotus Circle,” which has proved so successful a means in America of bringing the truths of Theosophy to children. I might also enter the lists as a teacher, for I have taught a good many children, and in that capacity would beg you earnestly not to offer prizes of any sort or kind for this work. Let there be no competition: it is the bane of our modern education: it is never necessary, and one of the first Theosophical lessons might, in my opinion, be usefully given to explain—how all competition strikes at the root of that feeling of brotherhood which we are trying to stir within our children.

Let the Sunday Schools of Theosophy teach other than this, and it will avoid a serious evil. When we have taught the love of good work for its own sake we shall have done much! But it is as “parent” that my thoughts have been chiefly turned to this subject, and I venture to put a few of them into words.

In the first place, I feel very strongly that in all cases, where it is possible (and I can hardly imagine a case where it is not possible), parents should teach their own children. It is agreed, perhaps, that all parents cannot teach; that it is not a wise thing to attempt with one’s own children. In ordinary teaching there is much to be said in favour of this theory, but, to begin with, the genius for *teaching* is not the first essential. It is the genius of sympathy; the intimate knowledge of the character of our children, that provides the qualification; and, to go on with, if the attempt be unwise, there must be, I think, something wrong in the relationship between parent and child, and the sooner that is looked into the better for both.

Let us be quite sure, in handing over our children to the friend—however kind, however interesting—once a week, that we are neither lazy-hearted or minded; or, if we do hand them over once a week, let us see that they learn something from us in the remaining six days.

We are all agreed that our object is so to train our children that they may, in due time, and, by a natural growth, become Theosophists; the means to secure this end are many and varied, and we should not, naturally, all agree